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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/851,040	05/08/2001	Stephen Paul Zimmerman	8072M	2167

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THE PROCTER & GAMBLE COMPANY
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY DIVISION
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EXAMINER

BECKER, DREW E

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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1761

DATE MAILED: 07/11/2003

14

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/851,040

Applicant(s)

ZIMMERMAN ET AL.

Examiner

Drew E Becker

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 29 April 2003.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-30 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 24-27 and 30 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-23, 28 and 29 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____
- ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
- ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- ☐ Other:

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Amendment

1. The declaration filed on April 29, 2003 under 37 CFR 1.131 is sufficient to overcome the Torengos and Bezek et al references.

Information Disclosure Statement

2. The information disclosure statement received October 3, 2001 fails to comply with the provisions of 37 CFR 1.97, 1.98 and MPEP § 609 because the three "sample" references do not include a date.

Specification

3. The disclosure is objected to because of the following informalities: page 1 includes an attorney docket number, which should be removed when referring to an application.

Election/Restrictions

4. This application contains claims 24-27 and 30 drawn to an invention nonelected without traverse in Paper No. 9. A complete reply to the final rejection must include cancelation of nonelected claims or other appropriate action (37 CFR 1.144) See MPEP § 821.01.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

5. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(a) the invention was known or used by others in this country, or patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country, before the invention thereof by the applicant for a patent.

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

6. Claims 1-4, 10, 12-15, and 23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(a) as being anticipated by Applicants' Admitted Prior Art (page 8, lines 19-32 of the specification). Applicants' Admitted Prior Art [AAPA] teaches non-planar snack pieces in a nested arrangement with a volumetric bulk density of 26 to 59×10^{-5} g/mm³, a package volumetric bulk density of 13 to 20×10^{-5} g/mm³, and chips which are concave, have similar shape and size, and a fat content of 38% (page 8, lines 19-32). The snack pieces would have inherently overlapped when packaged and possessed some degree of surface randomness.

7. Claims 1, 3, 10, 12-13, 21-22, and 28 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Carey et al [Pat. No. 5,747,092].

Carey et al teach overlapping non-planar snack pieces comprising chips with random surface features (Figure 1), a bulk density of 5-9.5 lb/ft³ or 8 to 15.2×10^{-5} g/mm³ (column 20, line 39), a fat content of 18.5% (column 24, line 63), consistent size and shape (column 18, lines 5-39), packaging (column 20, line 37), a minimum thickness of .03125" (column 18, line 14), a maximum thickness at least 2.75 times greater than the

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minimum thickness (column 5, line 59) which results in a maximum thickness of at least 2.2 mm. The snack pieces would have inherently overlapped when packaged.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

8. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

9. Claims 8 and 11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over AAPA.

AAPA teaches the above mentioned components. AAPA does not recite a snack piece density of 1 to 17×10^{-4} g/mm³ or a modulus of elasticity of 0.1-6 g/mm². It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to use a snack piece density of 1 to 17×10^{-4} g/mm³ in the product of AAPA since this would have been done during the course of normal experimentation and optimization, since AAPA already included a volumetric bulk density of 26 to 59×10^{-5} g/mm³ and a package volumetric bulk density of 13 to 20×10^{-5} g/mm³ (page 8, lines 19-32), and since a dense snack piece would reduce the shipping and storage cost per package. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to use a modulus of elasticity of 0.1-6 g/mm² in the product of AAPA since this would have been done during the course of normal experimentation

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and optimization and since a more resilient chip would be less likely to break during shipping and storage.

10. Claims 8 and 11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Carey et al.

Carey et al teach the above mentioned components. Carey et al do not recite a snack piece density of 1 to 17×10^{-4} g/mm³ or a modulus of elasticity of 0.1-6 g/mm². It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to use a snack piece density of 1 to 17×10^{-4} g/mm³ in the product of Carey et al since this would have been done during the course of normal experimentation and optimization, since Carey et al already included a bulk density of 5-9.5 lb/ft³ or 8 to 15.2×10^{-5} g/mm³ (column 20, line 39), and since a dense snack piece would reduce the shipping and storage cost per package. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to use a modulus of elasticity of 0.1-6 g/mm² in the product of Carey et al since this would have been done during the course of normal experimentation and optimization and since a more resilient chip would be less likely to break during shipping and storage.

11. Claims 5-7 and 16-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over AAPA as applied above, in view of Fink et al [Pat. No. 6,129,939].

AAPA teaches the above mentioned components. AAPA does not recite a bowl shape, sphere-cap, or a radius of curvature of 5-500 mm. Fink et al teach a snack piece comprising a bowl shape with a sphere cap (column 2, line 24). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to incorporate the bowl shape with a sphere-cap of Fink et al into the product of AAPA since both are directed to snack pieces, since

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AAPA already included curved chips (page 8, lines 19-32), and since chips having bowl shapes and sphere caps were commonly known as shown by Fink et al. Although not specifically recited, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to use a radius of curvature of 5-500 mm for the product of AAPA since this size of curvature was commonly used for chips, since this would have been done during the course of normal experimentation and optimization, and since AAPA already included a curved surface (page 8, lines 19-32).

12. Claims 9, 21-22, and 28-29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over AAPA as applied above, in view of Carey et al.

AAPA teaches the above mentioned components. AAPA does not recite a maximum thickness of 2.5-5.5 mm and a lipid content of less than 23%. Carey et al teach a snack piece comprising a maximum thickness of at least 2.2 mm (as explained above) and a fat content of 18.5% (column 24, line 63). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to incorporate the thickness and fat content of Carey et al into the product of AAPA since both are directed to snack pieces, since the thickness and fat content would have been varied during the course of normal experimentation and optimization, since some consumers preferred products low levels of fat, and since a thicker snack piece would be less likely to break during shipping and transport.

13. Claims 4-7 and 15-19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Carey et al as applied above, in view of Fink et al.

Carey et al teach the above mentioned components. Carey et al do not recite a concave, bowl shape with a sphere-cap and a radius of curvature of 5-500 mm. Fink et

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al teach a snack piece comprising a bowl shape with a sphere cap (column 2, line 24). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to incorporate the bowl shape with a sphere-cap of Fink et al into the product of Carey et al since both are directed to snack pieces, since Carey et al already included a non-planar surface, and since chips having bowl shapes and sphere caps were commonly known as shown by Fink et al. Although not specifically recited, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to use a radius of curvature of 5-500 mm for the product of Carey et al since this size of curvature was commonly used for chips, since this would have been done during the course of normal experimentation and optimization, and since Carey et al already included a non-planar surface.

14. Claims 14, 23, and 29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Carey et al as applied above, in view of AAPA.

Carey et al teach the above mentioned components. Carey et al do not recite a packaged bulk density of 10 to 35×10^{-5} g/mm³. AAPA teach a packaged bulk density of 13 to 20×10^{-5} g/mm³ (page 8, lines 19-32). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to incorporate the packaged bulk density of AAPA into the product of Carey et al since both are directed to snack pieces, since Carey et al already included a bulk density of 5-9.5 lb/ft³ or 8 to 15.2×10^{-5} g/mm³ (column 20, line 39), and since this range of packaged bulk density was commonly used for snack pieces as shown by AAPA.

Response to Arguments

15. Applicant's arguments filed April 29, 2003 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Applicant argues that AAPA "lack random surface features" and appears to argue that ridges are not random surface features. However, applicant's specification did not include any particular definition for "random surface features". Therefore, the conventional meaning and broadest reasonable interpretation should be used when interpreting the instant claims. In this case, nearly any type of snack chip would have possessed some degree of "random surface features" when viewed closely enough. With regards to the ridges, the examiner agrees that ridges are not random surface features themselves. However, the individual surfaces of the ridges and/or chips would have possessed some degree of "random surface features" when viewed closely enough since they were conventionally fried in cooking oil which was well known to provide surface bubbles and blisters.

Applicant argues that Carey et al is planar. However, as defined by applicants' specification (page 10, lines 27-30) non-planar was defined as: "three-dimensional, typically single or a multiple of curved regions". Carey et al clearly illustrated a snack piece which is three-dimensional as well as having multiple curved regions (Figures 1-3).

Conclusion

16. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than **SIX MONTHS** from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Drew E Becker whose telephone number is 703-305-0300. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday 8am-6pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Milton Cano can be reached on 703-308-3959. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are 703-872-9310 for regular communications and 703-872-9311 for After Final communications.

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Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-308-1495.



Drew E Becker

Examiner

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July 9, 2003